

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-9, 13-18, 20-23, and 27 are pending in the present amendment, Claims 1-3, 7, 13, 15, 17, and 27 having been amended, and Claims 5 and 19 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for amendments to the claims is believed to be self-evident from the originally filed specification.¹ Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-9, 13-23, and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Lockridge (U.S. Pat. Pub. No 2003/0110240, herein Lockridge) in view of Nessett et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,865,673, herein Nessett).

With respect to the rejection of Claim 1 as unpatentable over Lockridge and Nessett, Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to Claim 1 overcomes this ground of rejection. Amended Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*,

a storage unit configured to store a MAC list in which information for one client is set as registration data for one slot, ***the MAC list including a pre-determined number of empty slots that define openings in the MAC list for additional devices to be granted permission to access the information processing apparatus, one of the empty slots being set to change from empty to closed after a predetermined amount of time has lapsed, a closed slot being a slot on the MAC list that cannot be occupied...***and

a control unit configured to change the one of the empty slots from empty to closed in response to the lapse of the predetermined amount of time.

Lockridge and Nessett, taken alone or in proper combination, do not disclose or suggest every element of amended Claim 1.

¹ For example, see original Claims 5 and 19, and page 21, lines 25-32 in the originally filed specification.

Claim 1 is amended to clarify the meaning of empty slot and closed slot. In the invention defined by Claim 1, an empty slot is changed to a closed slot after a lapse of a predetermined time. The MAC list includes slots that identify the MAC address of a device that can access the information processing apparatus. An empty slot in the MAC list defines an opening in the MAC list for an additional device to be granted permission to access the information processing apparatus. A closed slot is a slot on the MAC list that cannot be occupied with a MAC address.

The predetermined number of empty slots in the MAC list allows an administrator to control how many devices can access the information processing apparatus. When all the empty slots become full, no further devices can be granted access. Setting an empty slot to become a closed slot provides additional security to a network by minimizing an opportunity for an unknown device to fill an empty slot on the MAC list.

Lockridge describes a router that determines the IP and MAC addresses associated with the detected statically configured network device.² The router then compares the detected IP and MAC addresses to a list of active IP and MAC addresses in the LAN.³ The router determines whether there is a conflict between the statically configured network device and another device connected to the LAN.⁴ If there is not conflict, the router adds the MAC address to the routing table.⁵

However, Lockridge does not describe a MAC list that includes empty slots and closed slots as discussed in Claim 1. Moreover, there is no “a control unit configured to change the one of the empty slots from empty to closed in response to the lapse of the predetermined amount of time.”

² See Lockridge ¶ 0020.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Lockridge, ¶0021.

Nessett has been considered, but does not cure the deficiencies in Lockridge. Nessett does not disclose or suggest a MAC list that includes empty slots and closed slots as discussed in Claim 1. When rejecting Claim 5, page 6 of the Office Action refers to col. 4, lines 20-25 of Nessett. This section of Nessett states that a “network security management system may optionally reject the connection from the device if connection occurred outside of the window of time the consumer allocated to installation of the device.” This does not necessarily mean that an empty slot in a MAC list is changed to a closed slot, as described in amended Claim 1. There are other ways to reject a connection, such as denying connections to the IP address. Col. 4, lines 23-25 of Nessett specifically states that the IP address of the device is stored.

Thus, not only does Nessett not disclose or suggest a MAC list that includes empty slots and closed slots as discussed in Claim 1, Nessett does not disclose or suggest the claimed “a control unit configured to change the one of the empty slots from empty to closed in response to the lapse of the predetermined amount of time.”

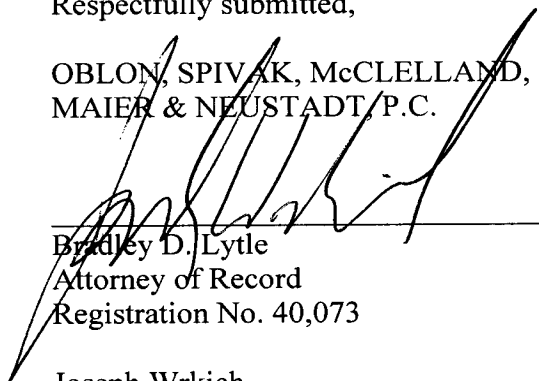
In view of the above-noted deficiencies, a person of ordinary skill in the art could not properly combine Lockridge and Nessett to arrive at the invention defined by amended Claim 1.

In view of the above-noted distinctions, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 (and any claims dependent thereon) patentably distinguish over Lockridge and Nessett, taken alone or in proper combination. Claims 13, 15, and 27 recite elements analogous to those of Claim 1. Thus, Claims 13, 15, and 27 (and any claims dependent thereon) patentably distinguish over Lockridge and Nessett, taken alone or in proper combination, for at least the reasons stated for Claim 1.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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